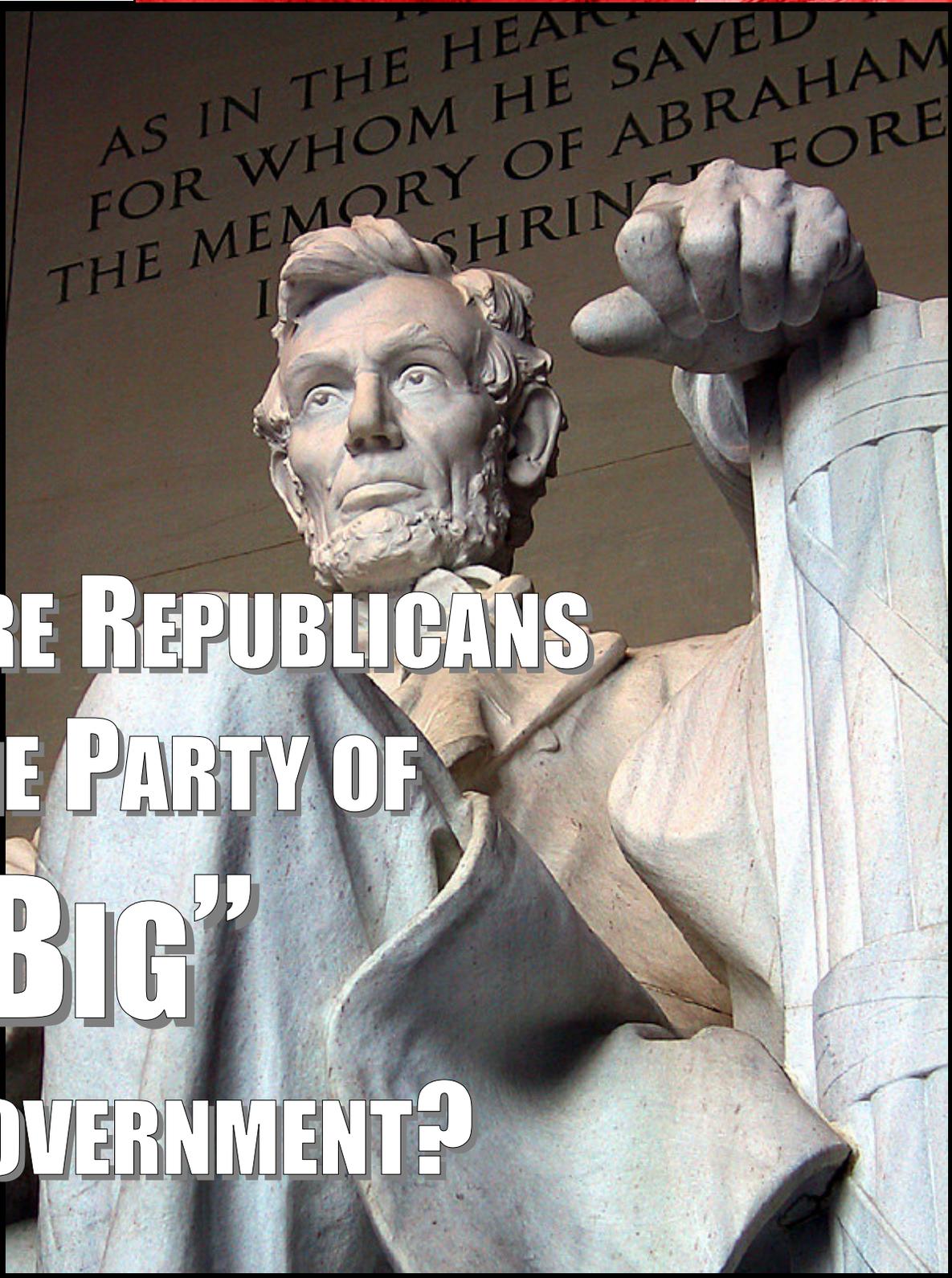


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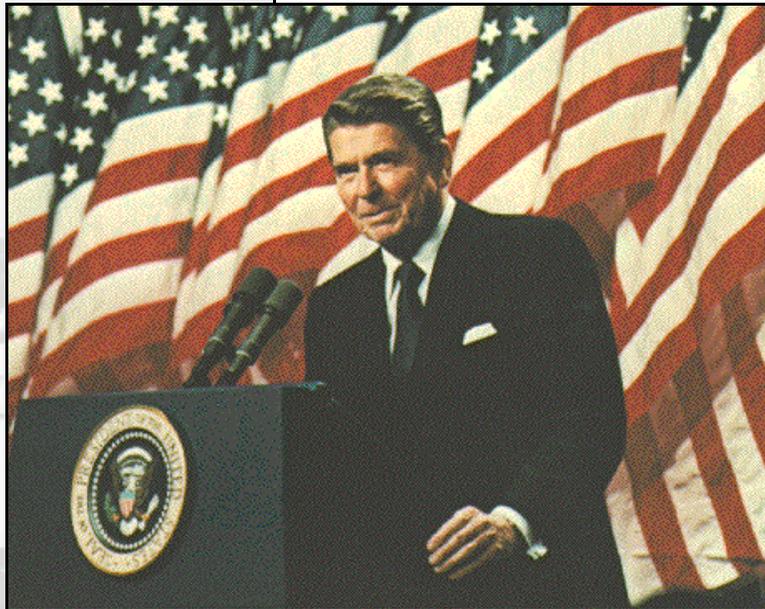
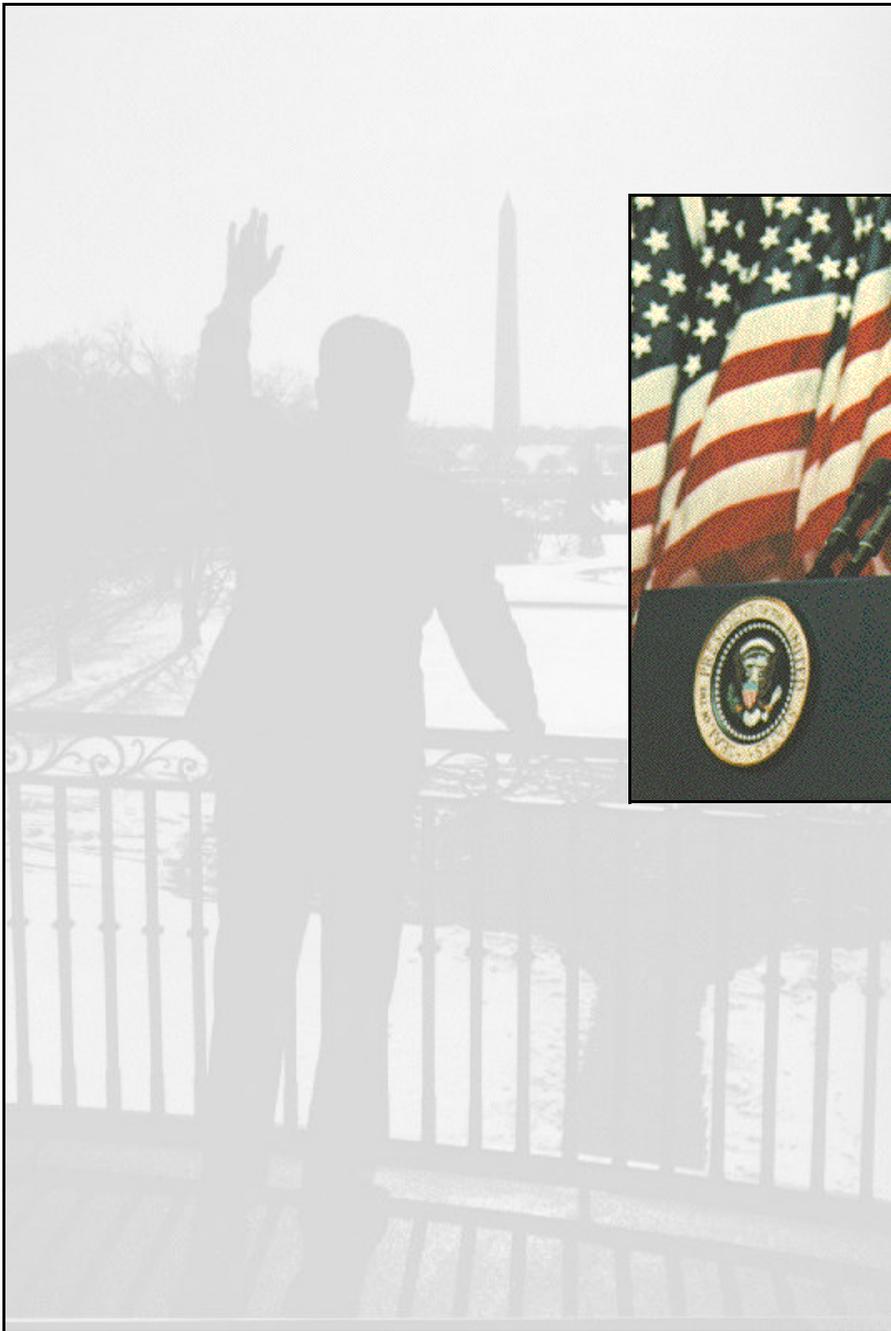
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ARE REPUBLICANS THE PARTY OF “BIG” GOVERNMENT?

FEATURING ARTICLES BY: Rep. John Boehner, Sen. Jim Talent,
Sen. Larry Craig, Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon,
Rep. Jim Nussle, and Rep. Mark Kennedy



“Now we hear again the echoes of our past: a general falls to his knees in the hard snow of Valley Forge, a lonely President paces the darkened halls, and ponders his struggle to preserve the Union; the men of the Alamo call out encouragement to each; a settler pushes west and sings a song, and the song echoes out forever and fills the unknowing air.

It is the American sound. It is hopeful, big-hearted, idealistic, daring, decent and fair. That’s our heritage, that is our song. We sing it still. For all our problems, our differences, we are together as of old, as we raise our voice to the God who is the Author of this most tender music. And may He continue to hold us close as we fill the world with our sound – sound in unity, affection, and love – one people under God, dedicated to the dream of freedom that He has placed in the human heart, called upon now to pass that dream on to a waiting and hopeful world.”

President Ronald Reagan
January 21, 1985

DIRECT ALL CORRESPONDENCE, QUESTIONS, & COMMENTS TO:
IN THE HOUSE: IN THE SENATE:

Don Seymour Jr.
1011 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6205
don.seymour@mail.house.gov

Christopher Papagianis
493 Russell SOB
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-6154
christopher_papagianis@talent.senate.gov

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ARE REPUBLICANS THE PARTY OF BIG GOVERNMENT?



WHETHER THE ISSUE IS FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC, THE BIG NEW IDEAS ARE COMING FROM THE POLITICAL “RIGHT.” IT IS OUR HOPE THAT REPUBLICAN MEMBERS WILL CONTINUE TO USE THIS FORUM TO ARGUE FOR INVENTIVE POLICIES THAT BOLSTER AMERICA.

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Are Republicans the Party of Big Government?

SEN. JIM TALENT
&
REP. JOHN BOEHNER

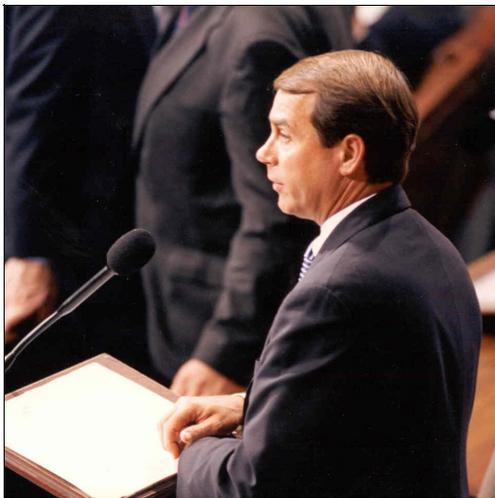
“Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle.”
-Thomas Jefferson

It’s been five years since *The American Sound* was last published and, just as in 1998, we have asked Republican Members of Congress to contribute articles and ideas to the journal. Whether the issue is foreign or domestic, the big new ideas are coming from the political “right.” It is our hope that Senators and Congressmen will continue to use this forum to argue for inventive policies that bolster America. To jumpstart *The American Sound*, we chose a theme for this particular issue – Are Republicans the Party of Big Government?

The return of *The American Sound* is marked by an interesting development in the political debate of the nation. For some months now, many conservative thinkers and journal-

ists have made the argument that Republicans have become the party of “big” government. Fred Barnes, the executive editor for the *Weekly Standard*, coined the term “big government conservatism” to describe this alleged shift in philosophy.

Mr. Barnes argues that what distinguishes a “big government” conservative from other conservatives is the willingness to use “what would normally be seen as liberal means – activist government – for conservative ends.” He describes “big government conservatism” essentially as a trade-off. A “big government” conservative, according to this view, is willing to increase spending in exchange for free-market so-



Representative John Boehner on the floor of the House of Representatives.

lutions and individual choice.

But we believe that view confuses libertarianism with conservatism in a way that does not reflect the historical traditions of either the left or right. There is nothing inconsistent about a conservative supporting more vigorous government, provided that he or she does so for purposes and using means that respect the importance of private life and the danger which government poses to freedom. For example, the Constitution was an act of conservative statesmanship, yet its object was to create a more perfect union by strengthening the central government.

As William F. Buckley said a generation ago, “conservatism is the politics of reality.” Or as George W. Bush has said, the government should only do a few things for people, but it should do those things well; and what the government should do will change over time, depending on how we can best empower people to participate in the social and economic institutions of private life. The question is practical rather than ideological. Republicans not only can but should support vigor in government where it is truly necessary to advance the values of freedom, opportunity, property rights and individual dignity.

The ideas presented in this journal reflect that time tested view of conservatism. In this issue, *The American Sound* presents ideas, arguments and solutions offered by Sen. Larry Craig and Representatives Mark Kennedy, Buck McKeon, and Jim Nussle. Together we display a vision of a government, whether bigger or smaller, that is accountable and relies on and respects the values and institutions that have evolved over the generations to constitute the heart of the

American nation.



Senator Jim Talent and President George W. Bush.

The purpose of *The American Sound* is to propose, promote, and defend these kinds of ideas. We recognize that at times, Republicans are going to disagree with one another. But as Jefferson pointed

out in his first inaugural address, our differences of opinion are not differences in principle. We are too great a Party to limit ourselves to “small” ideas. With all our creative energy, let us begin an era of renewal, remaining mindful that the Republican Party is not the party of big government; it is the party of big ideas.

republican.senate.gov/TheAmericanSound/

Stick to the Basics

REP. JOHN BOEHNER

Even the most casual readers undoubtedly have stumbled across headlines like this in newspapers, magazines and websites these past few months:

“Spending growth upsets conservatives...”

“Our current president and our former president ... show some striking similarities.”

“GOP is a friend of big government.”

“Libertarians join ACLU.”



REP. JOHN BOEHNER (OH-8)
johnboehner.house.gov

As I read these lines, I'm reminded that the American people have consistently sent Republicans to our nation's capital with the mandate to change the business-as-usual attitude and approach to governance – to shift it away from the liberal, big government ways of the past. Of late, however, conservatives have noted an alarming trend – contrary to our stated philosophy, government seems to grow faster under Republican governance. Have Republicans become the party of big government?

The domestic platform that brought Republicans to the White House (1980) and then to Congress (1994) was based on cutting taxes and spending, a recommitment to government accountability and a strengthening of the Constitutional responsibilities of the federal government. The voters have regularly been in support of these advances, and have repeatedly chosen Republicans over others to pursue these goals.

Faced by electoral defeats in 1996, Republicans stopped talking about agency elimination and government cuts. It turned out the American people did not want a major reduction of government. They sought a government that was not necessarily smaller, but a government that was more accountable to the people, promoted responsibility and secured the opportunity for all to succeed.

President Bush's election in 2000 heralded the success of this philosophy. Then Governor Bush did not offer cuts to bureaucracy, but sought to use the power of government to promote these tenets.

In late 2003, with Republicans in control of both Congress and the White House, many expect the same beating drums that were present in the earlier days of the

“Republican Revolution.” Conservatives and libertarians alike were concerned to read that RNC Chairman Ed Gillespie might have implied “the days of Reaganesque Republican railings against the expansion of federal government are over.”

Surely the abandonment of the “cut government” philosophy has had some unfavorable consequences. Critics point out that in his first three years in office President Bush has yet to push for a cut in real spending in any area of the federal budget; compare this to the first three years in President Reagan's term where spending was curbed by an average of 23 percent in those areas that were cut, and by 11 percent across the board (and this was with a House dominated by Democrats). But as *National Review Online* Editor-at-large, Jonah Goldberg, has pointed out, even in the days of Reagan government was “getting bigger”:

Indeed, it's hard for both conservatives and liberals to admit, but gross welfare spending went up on Reagan's watch. Meanwhile the government grew under Reagan because the Gipper spent lavishly on defense.

The federal workforce has also increased since President Bush took office, now up to around 12.1 million people. Republicans created a new cabinet department, passed an education law, and now are pushing for the largest expansion of Medicare since 1965. In short, it seems a long way from 1994.

For the President and the Republican lawmakers who have allowed these things, does this necessarily equate to the “big government” politics associated with liberals? Does this mean that Republicans have become what we have long despised – the party of big government?

Not at all. For whatever missteps we've made (and there are some), the Republican Party is still one that cherishes and pursues the basic tenets of conservatism – low taxes, strong defense, free trade and judicial restraint – and abides by the principles of responsibility, accountability, and opportunity.

A PARTY, NOT AN IDEOLOGY

Even though we share many ideological similarities, Republicans are not libertarians. Libertarians are generally more hostile to government involvement of any kind on any level; Republicans share this antipathy to the extent that wherever and whenever possible, power (wrongly usurped in the first place by Democratic leaders) should be devolved from the federal government to the hands of states and localities.

But Republicans also are far from being purely conservative. A conservative would like to see the government shrink; a Republican does too, but – in acknowledging political realities (a new defensive posture after September 11th for one) and the multitude of stakeholders in government after years of liberal control – has often had to settle for simply slowing its rate of growth. Republicans have accepted such realities as the burdens of majority governance.

The Republican Party has in recent years, contrary to conservative means – but still consistent with its fundamental tenets – sought to use the power of government for conservative ends. For example, look at the Republican Contract with America. The document was clearly rooted in conservative principles and aimed at conservative ends: responsibility (welfare reform and “losers pay” laws), accountability (fiscal restraint and term limits), and opportunity (small business incentives and tax cuts). A primary goal of ours was to restore the faith people once had in the integrity of the federal government. We said this would “be the end of government that is too big, too intrusive, and too easy with the public’s money,” and we meant it. A half-century of Democratic control and mismanagement left America with a monster in Washington, wildly out of control, wasting taxpayer money, usurping the roles and responsibilities of individuals and civil society.

We did not say this would “be the end of government,” period. Instead of simply eliminating the beast, Republicans sought to tame it, to manage it. Welfare, the federal criminal code, the tax code, Social Security – what we tried to do was make it all work, to make these government programs more efficient so that they actually met the needs of the American people. Liberalism had become the status quo, and we would use the tool of liberalism – government – to change that.

RESPONSIBILITY

The 1995 debate over welfare reform is a perfect example of Republicans using government to meet conservative ends: self-sufficiency and self-responsibility for those trapped in the tentacles of government handouts.

Having only recently regained control of the House, Republicans were anxious to push an aggressive agenda that heeded the words of President Reagan: “Welfare’s purpose should be to eliminate, as far as possible, the need for its own existence.” By giving states both latitude and incentives for encouraging and helping people to find work, we were able to reverse the course set by our Democratic predecessors that cost Americans \$8 trillion and imprisoned more people with federal dependency than it helped. No, we did not end welfare. Instead, we applied conservative principles to the federal machinery and made it work for those who needed it. And it’s working.

Last year’s debate over the creation of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides another example. The goal of the new department is to increase the speed and effectiveness of the government in protecting the American people from hostile enemies, not to create an unwieldy bureaucracy. By interconnecting once disparate but related functions of government, this massive reorganization will make government more efficient and more capable of fully

meeting its responsibility to “provide for the common defense.”

How so? DHS provides the flexibility necessary to create a modern, agile workforce capable of responding to shifting threats. The Secretary of Homeland Security has greater management tools and oversight of DHS employees – “the freedom to get the right people in the right job at the right time, and to hold them accountable,” as President Bush has said. At the same time, as we crafted the DHS we were careful to preserve collective bargaining rights and protections for workers from unfair practices such as discrimination, political coercion, and whistle-blower reprisals.

Republicans have also ensured that federal agencies are more responsible with the taxpayer dollars that fund them. While the actual number of federal employees admittedly has risen under President Bush, the biggest increases have come in the number of contract employees. Hiring from the private sector instead of the civil service helps avoid inflexible, permanent costs, and makes it easier to reduce the size of government once necessary tasks have been completed. According to the GAO, while six out of ten contracts are won by the federal workers who would have had them otherwise, the government saves taxpayers an average of 20 percent with each project that is competitively sourced. No, the sheer size of government in terms of manpower and dollars hasn’t lessened during the Bush administration – but programs are operating more effectively and efficiently, and the long-term goal of government reduction is all the more attainable.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The bipartisan effort of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 has been another example of Republicans using government to meet a conservative end: accountability for those responsible for educating our children. From the time I accepted the position of Chairman of the House Education & Workforce Committee, we’ve worked to bring reforms before Congress that would enable states and local governments to once again handle the responsibility of maintaining schools that educate our children.

Since the federal government began investing hundreds of billions of dollars in our public schools there have not only been few positive results, but we’ve seen a steady decline in overall performance. Now, because of the NCLB, a framework finally exists that emphasizes and demands accountability from states and local school districts. NCLB empowers parents, voters, and taxpayers with data about public schools – “sunshine” is pouring into the public education system and increasing accountability for results.

(Continued on page 13)



President George W. Bush and Rep. John Boehner.

Build America Bonds

Investing in American Transportation to Create Jobs and Economic Growth

SEN. JIM TALENT

The Federal Reserve recently reported that the pace of economic expansion has picked up. Positive economic data has been coming in, including a report showing an increase in American jobs in September, the first gain since the beginning of the year. Factories are also reporting an increase in demand for a variety of goods including cars, computers and machinery. But, good economic news should make Congress even more vigilant to enact a pro-jobs, pro-growth agenda. We need to do what we can to translate these economic improvements into more American jobs.

Now is the time for some big creative thinking in Washington about what we can do to make a long-term investment in America's infrastructure and in American jobs. This thinking should include building the nation's infrastructure to create millions of jobs and generate significant economic growth.

In order to fully reap the benefits of economic recovery, we must invest in America's infrastructure to sustain growth and new jobs. Driving around my home state of Missouri, I've seen first hand the dire condition of our transportation infrastructure. Serious improvements and major projects have been either scrapped or shelved due to a lack of funds and evidence of this can be seen in crumbling bridges, congested highways and failing locks and dams.

Americans rely almost exclusively on motor vehicles for mobility. Travel in private vehicles accounts for 91 percent of all personal miles of travel. Air travel accounts for about 5 percent, while mass transit accounts for 2 percent. Roughly 32 percent of America's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition and 36 percent of America's major urban roads are congested. Almost 27 percent of America's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

It is vital that we increase transportation infrastructure spending to empower cash-strapped states and local govern-



SEN. JIM TALENT (MO)
talent.senate.gov

ments to complete significant infrastructure projects across all modes of transportation. We do not have the luxury of waiting until the next decade. Once the baby boom generation begins to retire, the need to remedy the shortfalls in Social Security and Medicare is liable to consume all available funds.

In May 2003, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and I introduced a major transportation infrastructure investment plan we call Build America Bonds. The legislation would provide an extra \$50 billion in bonds for the nation's transportation needs. Build America Bonds has the potential to create millions of jobs, generate billions in economic growth and save thousands of lives every year by improving transportation safety. By building and repairing our roads, bridges, railways, runways, transit systems and ports we will create jobs now and enable economic recovery for the future.

Here's how it would work. Build America Bonds will raise \$50 billion for transportation infrastructure through a one-time bonding program that will empower states and local governments to complete significant infrastructure projects across all modes of transportation. These funds would be in addition to current TEA-21 dollars. The greatest obstacle most large transportation projects must overcome is their cost. Build America Bonds would increase the federal funding available for transportation projects. And we can do it without a tax increase.

Under this proposal, 30-year bonds would be issued by a federally-chartered, non-profit corporation. Additional bonds will be invested and used to repay the principal at maturity. These bonds will also be available in smaller denominations, so that Moms and Dads, Grandmas and Grandpas

can purchase a \$25 or \$50 Build America Bond for their children or grandchildren, and invest in America's infrastructure and American jobs.

Each bond issued will represent a piece of prosperity - a new bridge, a safer road, a port improvement or a light rail extension. Every additional \$1 billion investment in highway and transit infrastruc-



Transportation infrastructure means jobs.

ture creates 47,500 new jobs, supports almost \$2 billion in family earnings, and generates \$540 million in federal income and social security tax receipts. And for every dollar invested in federal transportation infrastructure, an estimated \$5.70 in economic activity is generated. Build America Bonds has the potential to create at least 2 million new jobs and generate more than \$285 billion in economic activity.

The initiative would also save American lives. More than 42,000 people lose their lives, and nearly 3 million people are injured every year in motor vehicle accidents. These accidents cost the country more than \$231 billion annually. Infrastructure improvements made possible through Build America Bonds will enhance safety and have the potential to save 12,000 lives each year that are currently lost due to poor road conditions and deteriorating bridges, including additional lives saved and accidents prevented due to enhancements across other modes of transportation.

Build America Bonds will help lay the foundation for long-term economic development and growth. Just as investment in an interstate highway system in the 1950s spurred economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, Build America Bonds will create jobs and generate economic growth in the 2010s and 2020s.

Investing in infrastructure is the key to generating long-term economic growth by promoting the efficient and productive flow of goods and services. Transportation infrastructure enables commerce to flourish. By investing more in America's transportation infrastructure, we will not only improve national productivity and stimulate the economy here at home, but also increase America's competitiveness abroad.

Clogged roads, congested airports, failing bridges, outdated transit, railway, and port systems are all hindering the American economy and pinning America's potential growth. The danger for American industry is that transportation infrastructure will continue to atrophy, even as other advanced industrial nations bolster their businesses with state-of-the-art transportation infrastructure systems.

Investing in our transportation infrastructure will empower American businesses by increasing their competitive edge domestically and globally. Infrastructure investment is a crucial component of a productive and competitive economy because it underpins most private economic activities. The cars and trucks of private business operate on public, federally funded roads. Private shipping companies depend on public ports and waterways. For example, 84 percent of the \$7 trillion worth of commodities delivered annually from sites in the U.S. are transported on American highways. Improving American transportation infrastructure would in-

crease America's productivity and competitiveness by lowering the cost of doing business in America.

Furthermore, if the services provided by our transportation infrastructure are exceptional, private enterprises will prosper. New roads, runways, highways, trains, ports, and transit systems reduce travel time and increase productivity. The link between public investment in our transportation infrastructure systems and private productivity is clear. Traffic congestion costs American motorists \$67.5 billion a year in wasted time and fuel costs as Americans spend billions of hours a year stuck in traffic. A significant investment to build and improve roads has the potential to save U.S. motorists \$49 billion a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs, averaging \$255 per motorist. And these potential savings don't account for the economic benefits we could ex-

pect from improvements and enhancements across other modes of transportation.

We need to invest in America's infrastructure to lower the cost of doing business in America. New and improved transportation infrastructure will make the American economy more competitive, productive and efficient and also help stem the export of American jobs overseas.

Today's transportation infrastructure does not meet the needs of today's economy, let alone the needs of tomorrow's. As a result, the ability of American businesses to produce and distribute their goods is steadily being eroded alongside our existing transportation infrastructure. Today, America must recommit itself to investing in

transportation infrastructure to realize economic growth tomorrow.

All too often we forget that the federal government's accounting practices, unlike that of American business, make no distinction between outlays for consumption and outlays that should be termed investments, like transportation infrastructure. Infrastructure is undoubtedly a powerful generator of employment and economic growth. We have the capacity to invest more American dollars in the American economy if only we make it a priority. We are in the midst of an economic recovery and a significant investment in transportation infrastructure is needed to improve national productivity, create jobs, generate economic growth and return America to prosperity.

I've traveled around the country discussing this proposal with the construction industry, business people, labor unions, civic leaders, local residents and editorial boards. And I've met with national stakeholders in Washington, D.C. The response at these meetings has been overwhelmingly positive.

(Continued on page 18)



Sen. Talent introduces Build America Bonds.

A Western Point of View

SEN. LARRY CRAIG

Homeowners know that an important part of every household is a well-filled toolbox. Even the least-handy among us realizes it is good to have different screwdrivers, flat and phillips head, large and small. Hammers, wrenches, ratchets, sockets, pliers – all serve a special need. Imagine how difficult it would be to maintain your home if all you had was a hammer or saw. It would be practically impossible to properly maintain your home. Yet that is the approach some would prefer with regard to managing our public lands.



SEN. LARRY CRAIG (ID)
craig.senate.gov

It is time to move our public lands management agencies away from a “one-size-fits all” management policy and back toward their original missions. As set forth in law, the missions are to achieve high quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of all users. We must allow them to look in their toolboxes and choose the right tool for the job.

ACTIVE PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT

Forests and rangelands are dynamic systems that constantly change in response to both natural and man-made events. They are never static. Any scientist will tell you that a healthy forest or rangeland requires active management. Like your home, you can’t just let it go and expect it to be sound and healthy. You have to actively manage the resource by doing everything from thinning trees, to spraying for weeds, to maintaining roads.

An example of a “one-size-fits-all” management concept is the Roadless Initiative. The Clinton Administration attempted to side-step Congress and lock the American people out of their own lands under the questionable guise of protecting resources. The Initiative does not meet the mission of the Forest Service “to manage the sustainable multiple-use to meet the diverse needs of the people.” If user groups are denied access to the public lands, then only one management concept is being attained: preservation. When applied to vast areas of public land, this becomes management by exclusion, not inclusion.

The Roadless Initiative, as designed, attempts to set aside the land for a select few and locks out most of the American public. While wilderness designations serve a valuable purpose, just two percent of those who use our public

lands choose to visit a wilderness area. Current wilderness designations, combined with the Clinton proposal, resulted in more than half of the 192 million acres of National Forest being managed as wilderness, off limits, with little opportunity for public enjoyment, and where “man is an infrequent visitor.” In creating the Wilderness Act, Congress never intended huge expanses, as proposed by the Clinton Administration, to become off limits.

We in the West recognize the value those lands hold for natural resources, such as timber, minerals, oil, and wildlife, and no one can deny the opportunity they hold for recreation. Since the lands are in the public domain, they are generally open for all to use without discrimination. However the courts resolve the controversy over the Roadless Initiative, we must find ways to protect our resources and provide for multiple-uses of our public lands.

The “one-size-fits-all” approach to public lands management is potentially destructive and limits the ability for different types of recreation and wildlife to prosper.

Like using a hammer on a light switch, some solutions are not always appropriate.

And one solution that has proven increasingly to be inappropriate is shutting off access to public lands.

ACCESS

In order to maintain the values of public lands, I believe the most critical characteristic that needs to be preserved is access. Conservation and multiple use, for a century now the dominant policy of our public lands, require access. Only by accessing these areas can active management take place, providing protection for our public lands against disease, wild-fire, and insect epidemics.

Preservationism has at its core a desire to protect the rare, the wild, and the most beautiful. Within the last forty years Congress has accomplished this through designating 95 million acres of wilderness, four million of which are preserved in my home state of Idaho. We have protected virgin forest, wild species, and pristine areas and are proud to have this as one part of our Western legacy.

Extremists have, however, taken protectionism a political step further, seeking to limit any human presence whatsoever in these areas. Nowhere is it stated that part of our legacy is to refuse access to our public lands.



This is the West of Teddy Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the Forest Service, who said, "National Forests are made for and owned by the people. They should also be managed by the people. They are made, not to give the officers in charge of them a chance to work out theories, but to give the people who use them, and those affected by their use, a chance to work out their own best profit." The hopes and desires of these men can only be accomplished by preserving access to our public lands.

Without access to our lands, it is impossible to manage our public lands properly. Because of this approach, we now have unhealthy lands that are prime candidates for catastrophic wildfires and insect infestations of epic proportions. Nearly four million acres have been destroyed this fire season as a result. When did this become acceptable?

Rather than allowing access to public lands, some environmental groups would like to lock humans out, whether for recreation or resource management. I believe in a more reasonable approach.

Radical preservationism that embraces an extreme political agenda has no place on our public lands because it is inflexible. It refuses to acknowledge the salutary role of multiple use. It sees every acre of public land, set aside for the people, as a wilderness in the making. It seeks preservation, but sows conflict and degradation. In order to ensure the future of our public lands, we need to preserve access to them.

COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION

The long struggle over public access to our lands has left many with battle fatigue. Clearly, we need a new approach to solving natural resource conflicts, user conflicts, and management conflicts. In order to resolve conflict, all the players need to come "to the table" to explore our shared ideals instead of reinforcing our disagreements.

I think we should adopt the strategies of some local activists who have turned away from the existing national standoff. Instead, they are working to bridge differences, to find a common solution that reflects the national environmental ethic. In a phrase: collaborative conservation.

I believe collaborative conservation includes the following:

- We must discard the doctrine of national communities of interest, where decision makers are selected from national organizations, and return to a doctrine of local community interest. We should not allow federal bureaucracies and national organizations to upset the fragile process of local consensus making.
- We need a process of continuous improvement in reducing our impacts on the land. We must stipulate that for all the progress made by commodity-producing industries, loggers and ranchers, and recreationists - we can always do better.
- Federal government policies desperately need modernization. The government needs to manage better. It must not allow restrictive approaches based upon in-



flexible national mandates to trump what would otherwise be environmentally sound activities and shut out local people who have to live with the consequences of federal decisions.

As a community, we need to come together to solve the challenges of multiple-use in order to achieve conservation and balance on our public lands.

TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE

Like a lot of Westerners, I come from pioneer stock. My grandmother rode west in a covered wagon. The first wave of pioneers came here for the freedom of the open land. They were not raised as cowboys, or loggers, or miners, but they were willing to become whatever the times needed. The land supported their families and dictated their activities.

Now we are witnessing a second major migration, a new wave of pioneers, as likely to come from the West Coast as the East Coast. The jobs they take, when they arrive in Idaho, they could have anywhere, whether they are computer analysts, selling financial services, opening restaurants, or building a community. Like the pioneers before them, they are drawn to the West by its abundant natural resources – but for different reasons. A term for this movement could be "amenity migrants." Ask these newcomers what they do, and they might tell you, "I'm a computer analyst," or a stockbroker or a businessperson. However, they are just as likely to say, "I am a rock climber," "I am a hunter," "I ski," "I am a rafter," "I kayak," or "I hike the high country." These newcomers identify themselves by what they do after work or on the weekends as much as their activities from 9:00 to 5:00.

In their own way, these people are tied to the land like the pioneers of old. As a result, in the 21st Century, public lands still define the West. We still have an Old West, a rural society centered on the original commodity-producing industries and agriculture – and then there is a New West, centered on the vigorous quest for a quality of life that includes the enjoyment of the outdoors. What ties "the old" and "the new" together is an appreciation for the resources and the

(Continued on page 18)

Addressing the Tuition Crisis

REP. HOWARD "BUCK" MCKEON

America's higher education system is in crisis as a result of exploding college costs. According to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, cost factors prevent 48 percent of all college-qualified, low-income high school graduates from attending a four-year college and 22 percent from pursuing any college at all. Unless drastic action is taken immediately, more than two million college qualified students will miss the opportunity to go to college by the end of the decade.

As the Chairman of the House Subcommittee responsible for Higher Education, and as the grandfather of twenty-five, I refuse to sit idly by as millions of our young people are turned away from a degree in higher education. I recently introduced the Affordability in Higher Education Act which states, among other things, that if an institution increases its tuition and fees more than twice the rate of inflation, it could lose eligibility for federal aid. This "hammer" would be the final sanction in a five-year process where schools have ample opportunity to meet the challenge of affordability.

My legislation will address the college cost crisis head-on. The bill establishes a "College Affordability Index," a standard measure by which the consumers of higher education can understand and compare tuition increases in real terms. Using data already being reported by colleges and universities, the U.S. Department of Education will make information about college costs, including the College Affordability Index, publicly available through a user-friendly website.

Beginning in 2008, institutions with an Affordability Index above 2.0 must provide the following information to the U.S. Department of Education:

- (1) An explanation of the factors contributing to the increase in the institution's costs and in tuition and fees charged to students;
- (2) A management plan stating the steps the institution is and will be taking to reduce its college Affordability Index; and
- (3) An action plan, with a schedule, by which the institution will maintain or reduce increases in such costs and tuition and fees.

If the institution fails to comply with its own management plan after two academic years, additional action will be taken that includes the requirement of a detailed accounting of all costs and expenditures. That information will be made available to the public, and the institution will be placed in "cost affordability alert" status. Should compliance failure continue for an additional academic year, this lack of good faith efforts to increase affordability will result in additional measures. After giving notice to the institution and providing an opportunity for a hearing, the institutions will be removed from participation in programs within Title IV of the Higher Education Act, excluding direct aid to students in the form of Pell Grants, and Stafford and Direct Loans.

The legislation also addresses the college affordability issue by eliminating unfair barriers that make it difficult to transfer credits from one institution to another. With recent data showing that more than 50 percent of students attend multiple



REP. HOWARD "BUCK"
MCKEON (CA-25)
mckeon.house.gov

institutions of higher education, it has become increasingly important that students have the flexibility they need to transfer their credits among institutions. Students who are prohibited from transferring from one eligible institution to another for reasons considered to be territorial or political are faced with the additional costs of repeated course work and extended time to completion. The bill states that the agency or association that accredited the institution must not be the sole reason course work is not accepted for transfer. The course work must be evaluated on its own merits, and not based simply on the accreditor. In addition, the bill will require that institutions make their transfer of credit policies available to the public.

For the last several months, I have spent a great deal of time listening to suggestions of the higher education community on how to deal with this matter, and almost all of them, uniformly, have called for increased federal aid. I do not believe that blindly throwing more money into federal grants is the solution to this crisis. As college prices have continued to soar, the federal government has repeatedly increased financial support for higher education. In the four years since the last reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, federal student aid has grown by more than \$23 billion. Last year, Congress also raised the maximum Pell grant to \$4,050 a year. Student-loan interest rates are at their lowest levels in the program's 38-year history. However, the cost of college has continued to skyrocket.

Not surprisingly, the Affordability in Higher Education Act has encountered fierce opposition from the Higher Education community, who have assailed it as everything from "misguided" to accusing me, a fiscally conservative Republican and former small businessman, of attempting to invoke price controls on higher education. They have hired high priced lobbyists to derail this legislation and mounted one of the most aggressive political campaigns I have ever witnessed against a provision in the Higher Education Reauthorization bill.

Critics largely attribute the college

cost crisis to state budget cuts and difficult economic times, however, the facts show that tuition increases have persisted regardless of circumstances such as the economy or state funding. The fact of the matter is that in both good and bad economic times, institutions of higher education have continued to disproportionately increase the cost of college tuition. But this argument also ignores that colleges and universities can be doing more to control costs on their campuses. Recently, for example, *The New York Times* reported that college campuses all across the nation are lavishly spending valuable federal funds on Jacuzzis and rock climbing walls.

Furthermore, it needs to be pointed out that holding institutions accountable for cost increases is not equivalent to federal price controls. Price controls are defined as restrictions on maximum prices established and maintained by the government. The Affordability in Higher Education Act never establishes the price of college, nor does it tell institutions how they must meet the challenge of college affordability. Rather, the bill simply seeks to make information about cost increases publicly available and understandable, thereby empowering parents and students as the ultimate consumers of higher education, and to work with institutions to help implement plans to increase college affordability.

Its high time that institutions of higher education, the federal government, states, parents, and students all come together to address this crisis in higher education. If nothing is done now, the dream of a higher education will further slip out of the reach of American students and families. That is simply unacceptable. I encourage the American people to contact their representatives in Congress and urge them to take the first step in addressing this crisis by supporting The Affordability in Higher Education Act. Our children deserve nothing less.

REPRESENTATIVE MCKEON SERVES ON THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & THE WORK-FORCE. MR. MCKEON WAS FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1992.

The Effort to Fight Government Waste

REP. JIM NUSSLE

When you send your hard-earned tax dollars to the federal government, you expect that money to go toward providing for our nation's critical needs, such as defense, homeland security, health care, education, and infrastructure.

And, for the most part, it does.

But the federal government spends over \$69,000 per second. And, according to recent findings, billions and billions of that spending – of your tax dollars – is simply going to waste every year. Are you surprised? Unfortunately, probably not.

The problem of waste, fraud and abuse in federal government programs certainly isn't new. But at this time, our nation is fighting an ongoing war against terrorism, trying to get the economy going, trying to get Americans back to work, and trying to do all of this while running large deficits.

Americans at all levels, from individuals and families, to state and local governments, and small and large businesses, have tightened their belts to make ends meet. It's high time the federal government did the same. Simply acting to reduce the amount of money we're throwing out the window every day should not be too much to ask. It is the least we can do.

So as part the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Resolution, all committees of Congress and the federal government's General Accounting Office (GAO) were required to identify – and to look for means of reducing – waste, fraud and abuse in mandatory programs within their jurisdictions.

We chose to focus our efforts on mandatory (or "entitlement") spending for two primary reasons. First, mandatory spending is the largest and fastest growing piece of the federal budget, making up almost two-thirds of our nation's \$2.2 trillion budget.

Second, while discretionary spending is subject to annual review by Congress in the appropriations process, mandatory spending is essentially on autopilot. In other words, it just continues to go on, usually with annual increases, without any built-in process of review.

And as expected, the reports on this automatic spending found incredible amounts of waste, fraud, and abuse. In fact, in the span of just over two months they had to complete their reports to the Budget Committee, House committees identified waste totaling \$85 to \$100 billion over 10 years.

Some of their most striking examples included:

The Energy and Commerce Committee's findings show that, by eliminating double payments for Welfare and Medicaid administration to States, the Federal Government could save \$3.7 billion over 10 years, according to a CBO estimate.

Energy and Commerce also found that we could save \$15.5 billion over 10 years simply by requiring States to do a little comparison shopping on Medicaid-covered outpatient prescription drugs – rather than relying on the current law, out-of-date, pumped up payment system.

The Ways and Means Committee tells us that by instituting competitive bidding for Medicare covered outpatient prescription drugs – rather than relying on the current law overloaded payment system – we could save about \$9.2 billion over



REP. JIM NUSSLE (IA -1)
nussle.house.gov

10 years.

And the Committee found that simply by eliminating overpayments in the Supplemental Security Income Program, we could have saved \$2 billion – in fiscal year 2002, alone. Again, in just over two months, House committees found \$85 to 100 billion of this kind of stuff that is happening in our government – right now.

And what's probably more incredible is that once we took a closer look at these committee reports, it's pretty clear that we've barely scratched the surface.

First, while many of the reporting committees provided good reports, there were other committees that could have made a better effort than what they did.

Second, the billions in waste identified by the committee reports does not even include some of the most costly occurrences of waste in our government.

According to the GAO report, because the federal government lacks a comprehensive method of checking the legitimacy of Medicaid providers – things such as ensuring they have a valid operating license and no criminal record – scam providers have slipped through the cracks, and fraudulently collected from Medicaid more than \$1 billion dollars – in California alone.

GAO also reported that many individuals – some of whom have gone on to great success with assistance from federal government-sponsored student loan programs – have refused to pay back their loans. Unfortunately, there is little chance of repercussion for these people who default on their loans, as the Department of Education in many cases lacks the enforcement measures necessary to collect.

All that said, I'll be the first to admit that fighting waste and making government run more efficiently is not the be-all, end-all solution to our fiscal problems. In fact, even if we were to eliminate everything in these reports, we'd still have a deficit. But along with growing the economy and controlling government spending, it's a piece of the puzzle we can't do without. We may not be able to control all of the demands on our budget – but we can control how responsibly we spend the taxpayers' money. And at a bare minimum, we need to get going on eliminating the most obvious fat in our budget through a little more serious effort on waste, fraud and abuse.

It is a glaring, inexcusable problem. And it's going to have to be resolved if we're ever going to get serious about reducing this huge problem we have of throwing away this nation's tax dollars.

Keep in mind, this report is not the end of this effort, but rather a step in an ongoing process. I will continue to focus on this issue, my committee will continue to hold hearings to root out this problem, and I will continue to encourage my colleagues in Congress to step up their efforts.

If you would like learn more about this effort or read the report we published, please visit the House Budget Committee's website at: budget.house.gov.

REPRESENTATIVE NUSSLE IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE, AND SERVES ON THE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE. MR. NUSSLE WAS FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1990.

(Continued from page 6)

One of NCLB's best features is that it preserves the time-tested right of states to set their own standards for schools rather than imposing federal ones that all have to meet. Congress penned NCLB with a recognition that a "one size fits all" approach to education doesn't work. What works in Montpelier, Vermont may not work in Oxford, Ohio. What matters is that public schools in all states are accountable for the results they produce.

Critics have commonly attacked this aspect of the legislation, that there is no federally imposed standard or plan for local schools. This charge misses the point – NCLB wasn't designed to introduce a new maze of federal bureaucratic red tape, it was designed to induce accountability from the ground up. For the sake of state-to-state comparison, NCLB does require a small, randomly chosen sample of students in each state to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the fourth and eighth grade – again, without imposing a national test that all students in all states must take, and without imposing a national teacher quality standard on local schools. When states set their own standards according to their own methods, everyone can learn from what works and what doesn't; like a marketplace of ideas, different attempts at public schooling will provide wide-reaching benefits that a single federal standard would stifle.

This has all occurred with a U.S. Department of Education that, under the leadership of Secretary Paige, recently completed an independent, clean audit of its books (which were in poor shape when the Bush Administration took the reins in 2001). Here, not only have Republicans continued to pursue fiscal prudence, but we've taken aim to rescue education from the disastrous liberal politics that have dominated it in the past.

OPPORTUNITY

Students deserve the opportunities a good education affords them. While we all know that the educators and administrators in K-12 are well-meaning, not every public school is ready or equipped to handle the demands of NCLB. For them we provide an opportunity as well – underachieving schools are not "punished" as has been suggested; rather, they immediately qualify for extra help which includes federal funding for school improvement and technical assistance in developing a plan to turn the school around. We've provided more than \$4.5 billion for training, recruitment, incentives, loan forgiveness, and tax relief for teachers, and we've shielded teachers, principals and school board members from frivolous lawsuits.

NCLB also offers an escape hatch for students; parents with children in underachieving or dangerous public schools are given the right to obtain private tutoring and other supplemental services for their children, as well as the right to transfer their child to a better or safer public school with transportation costs covered, all paid through their child's share of federal Title I funds. While such opportunity is vehemently opposed by many Democrats, teachers unions, and

other powerful special interests, common sense and raw data tell us that school choice is good for our children. Robert Levy of the Cato Institute wrote the following in a February 2002 article on the Cleveland school-choice program:

The evidence in favor of school choice is compelling and consistent. In June 1999, for example, Harvard researchers had this to say: “Parents of voucher recipients are more likely to be ‘very satisfied’ with nearly every aspect of the schools they attend than are parents of students in the Cleveland public schools. Test scores in math and reading have risen in... the two schools newly established in response to the [program].” In September 2001, the Indiana Center for Evaluation reported that a “statistically significant positive impact of the program on students’ academic achievement [in Cleveland] ... is consistent with work in Milwaukee, New York, Washington, D.C., and Dayton, Ohio.”

A more recent study by The Manhattan Institute has shown that public schools improve when they are given an incentive to do so through programs that increase parental choice and promote increased competition in education. Simply put, school choice strengthens public education in America.

ON THE SIDE OF “THE PEOPLE”

The aforementioned are common sense measures that some conservatives and libertarians wrongly use as an indicator of the Republican Party’s alleged slide away from its principles. For years a Congress controlled by Democrats regulated and regulated, and taxed and taxed – power was concentrated on the Potomac, states reaped federal money, and the actual costs of government (in terms of dollars and liberties eroded) were hidden from the people. Liberal policies hampered local communities and inner-cities especially. Now we use the same power they used to concentrate authority in D.C. to return control to communities, allowing individuals to be stakeholders in their own future growth and prosperity.

But if conservatives and libertarians say they are fleeing from the Republican Party, where does that leave us? Are we any different from Democrats? Have we become what we long fought?

Hardly.

Democrats believe in the federal government as an end and a solution in itself; Republicans see it as a means – a means to meet the conservative end of re-empowering individuals and communities so that they may handle their own affairs, free from a federal government that is “too big, too

intrusive, and too easy with [their] money.” The difference is as clear today as ever.

Democrats want to spend; Republicans want to spend wisely, using the power of government to ensure that money gets to the right people and achieves the positive results we all want (and the rest goes back to the people that pay the bills). When the President indicated that we’d only be able to effectively spend \$2 billion of the \$3 billion pledged to fight AIDS in Africa this year, Democrats insisted he was sabotaging an otherwise compassionate effort – to Democrats it’s not how you spend, but how much you spend.

Democrats want to regulate; Republicans want to deregulate. In the waning days of his term President Clinton issued sweeping, complex, and costly new ergonomics rules that would have applied to six million employers with ninety-three million employees. The cost of implementing this senseless “one-size-fits-all” approach was projected to be at \$100

billion or more. This would have harmed small businesses with already narrowing profit margins and raised the price of consumer goods and services nationwide, all while providing no appreciable health benefit for workers. Congress acted quickly and President Bush signed a law repealing the rules mandated by OSHA. Democrats predictably cried foul. To them, it’s not how you regulate, but how much you regulate (and more is always better). As President Reagan said in 1986, “Government’s view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.”

Democrats support immigration provided it’s illegal; Republicans support immigration provided it’s legal. Democrats encourage immigrants to retain their language and to see themselves as separate and distinct from other Americans, plunging them into a cycle of dependency on the state for support. Republicans use the power of government to encourage and help immigrants to learn English and to understand the responsibilities of citizenship in the United States.

Democrats use the power of government to secure the influence of special interests in education; Republicans have used the power of government to help parents and children find schools that help them succeed.

Democrats advocate our participation in the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international schemes that unduly burden the United States and its people; Republicans believe in the framework provided by the Constitution, plain and simple. Congress makes our laws, not the United Nations or any other transnational body. Our laws apply to us in our land – there is no concept more fundamental than that in a democratic republic.

Democrats see people as members of faux racial classes; Republicans think that we all had it right back in 1964 – the Civil Rights Act makes it clear that you can’t discriminate against anyone whether their skin tone is lighter or darker



The audience for the signing of the 'No Child Left Behind' Act.

than yours.

Democrats don't care for the fundamental idea of federalism because it frustrates their efforts to centralize power and authority in Washington; Republicans actively work to devolve powers that rightfully belong to the states.

Democrats want to tax businesses at ever higher levels, never understanding that such taxes are simply passed along to the consumers they claim to be defending and supporting. Republicans have managed to repeal the Death Tax, and have succeeded in shifting the entire tax debate to the right (the argument hasn't even been whether or not to cut taxes, but by how much to cut them). Democrats condemn Republicans as "the party of the rich," though thanks to the Center for Responsive Politics we see where Democrats overwhelmingly get their money (hint: it isn't from mom and pop stores).

Democrats don't particularly care for economics; whether or not [insert service here] is made worse or more expensive by government regulation or monopolization isn't the issue for them. College, health care, housing, and anything (everything) else – that because of the free market is great and affordable for those who wish to pursue it – ought to be "free" and for "everyone." Republicans want to let the market work while helping only those who truly need it. What is "free" to Democrats costs the rest of Americans more and more of their paychecks.

Come to think of it, Democrats don't have much in the way of ideas: "more regulation," "more money" and "Republicans are bad" is what it typically boils down to. If the federal government isn't spending more or regulating more, the sky might fall; should that happen we can use copies of the *Federal Register* to prop it up.

WHERE WE'VE GONE WRONG

That all said, there are some legitimate complaints about Republicans as of late. In the last couple of years alone, Congress has:

- Voted to permit the reimportation of pharmaceuticals from foreign countries, damaging the very companies that invest to produce these life-saving drugs;
- Allowed the President to slap tariffs on steel that do more harm to U.S. manufacturing than to help steel makers; and
- Approved the largest federal farm subsidy ever, pushing agriculture away from the market and toward more government reliance.

In addition, the congressional watchdog organization, *Citizens Against Government Waste*, unveiled its 2003 edition of the *Pig Book* which listed 9,362 pork-type projects in the federal budget totaling \$22.5 billion. \$90,000 for the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame; \$800,000 for the Grammy Foundation; \$1 million for a study of bear DNA – there's no defending any of this. There's nothing responsible or accountable in billing taxpayers \$250,000 to implement the National Preschool Anger Management Project. Not

only do these programs lack the appropriate Congressional authorization, they're a drag on an already stretched federal budget. As the majority it should be we who clamp down on waste and abuse in the federal budget; here we have only ourselves as a party to blame.

THE FUTURE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

The previous examples do not constitute a fundamental shift in Republican attitudes or beliefs, nor should they be cause for the rift on the American right that many pundits predict. Republicans of both conservative and libertarian viewpoints still believe that the best government governs the least: that the locus of freedom rests with individuals – not with Courts, legislatures or bureaucrats.

Given this, we as Republican Members of Congress must recommit ourselves to a basic agenda aimed at returning power and resources to individuals and communities. As we did in the mid-90s, we must not be afraid of acting on a message which clearly resonates with the American people. We must:

- Free small businesses from the chains of federal regulation.
- Strengthen Social Security by giving individuals more control over their retirement and preserving the safety net for generations to come.
- Press forward with further deregulation in the energy industry, including (and most importantly) in the transmission of energy.
- Clamp down on illegal immigration and strengthen the assimilation process.
- Restrain the powers of the activist federal judiciary.
- Embolden and champion free trade, not managed trade.
- Simplify the tax code for all.
- Reign in discretionary spending and balance the federal budget.
- Help the President protect the homeland from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

The future of the Republican Party and the future of America demand it. Our goal should be to protect and strengthen the framework under which Americans can best prosper: one where taxes are low, defense is strong, trade is easy and laws are enforced. People are eager to provide for themselves if only the government would let them.

Are Republicans the party of big government? No. We just need to be sure to stick to the basics. We must seize this historical moment and champion the fundamental principles that have made Republicans the majority party: responsibility, accountability and opportunity. The cause is ours to lead and ours to let slip away.

REPRESENTATIVE BOEHNER IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE, AND IS THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE. MR. BOEHNER WAS FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1990.

Freeing Alternatives to Speedy Transportation

REP. MARK KENNEDY

We are spending too much time in traffic and away from our families. Traffic congestion costs the United States more than \$67 billion annually. We waste almost 6 billion gallons of fuel, and 3.6 billion hours idling in traffic jams. For the average person, this means \$1,160 and 62 hours wasted annually by congestion. If you break that number down further, that means each person spends almost \$4 per workday in lost fuel. That's bad for our families, our economy, and our environment. According to the Progressive Policy Institute, "...between 1987 and 1997, the share of federal highway funds going to new construction fell from 34 percent to 27 percent." At the same time, while Vehicle Miles Traveled increased by 42 percent, new road capacity only increased by 9 percent.

Congestion is getting worse nationwide. The most recent Urban Mobility Study conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute found that: "The amount of traffic experiencing congested conditions in the peak travel periods (three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon) has doubled in 20 years of the study from 33 percent in 1982 to 67 percent in 2001. This meant that two of every three cars experience congestion in their morning or evening trip." Additionally, congestion levels have increased in every area since 1982.

In my own home state of Minnesota, our problems are getting worse by the day. According to the 2000 Census, Minnesota, and the Minneapolis/St. Cloud Mega-Corridor in my own sixth congressional district, are experiencing one of the highest traffic congestion increases in the country.

The latest 10-year plan out of the Minnesota Department



REP. MARK KENNEDY (MN-6)
markkennedy.house.gov



of Transportation does not offer much room for hope that we will be able to wake-up from our traffic jam nightmare any time soon. Approved road construction does not come anywhere near to meeting demand. Minnesota is not alone in this battle. Across the nation, states are not able to put up the resources necessary for new roads.

The problem is one of resources: there is simply not enough money available to build the roads we need. Even the most ambitious calls for a gas tax increase will not provide the money we need. We need new ideas.

That's why I introduced the bipartisan Freeing Alternatives to Speedy Transportation – FAST Act (H.R. 1767) in the House of Representatives: to relieve congestion on the nation's interstate highway system. The FAST Act allows for the construction of new lanes, a voluntary option where users pay to use the new lanes if they decide it is worth it to them to get where they are going FASTER. The bill would repeal an outdated law from the 1950s that prevents innovation. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) has introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

The legislation includes three important conditions to promote fiscal responsibility and driver confidence. First, fees will only be collected using non-cash electronic technology – no tolls, and no tollbooths. Second, the voluntary fee is charged on new lanes only, and is dedicated to those new FAST lanes. This leads to the third point, when the revenues collected from FAST lane users have repaid the costs of the FAST lanes, the fees go away.

The FAST Act will provide states and users many benefits. The FAST Act empowers states with a new revenue stream they can use to solve their own problems so that they do not have to come to Washington D.C. every time they need to build a road. FAST lanes also will free up critical

dollars for other state priorities, so that high-dollar projects on congested metropolitan roads do not absorb all of a state's resources, leaving more dollars for small towns and rural areas. Projects get completed faster using FAST lanes; and when roads get built quicker, they cost less and get people moving sooner.

Every driver will benefit when FAST lanes are constructed. Drivers will have the choice to determine if FAST lanes make sense for them. Those who choose to use them will be able to get where they are going a little quicker for a small fee. Those who choose not to use the FAST lanes will benefit from having fewer cars in the existing lanes at no additional expense.

Sometimes, getting your child to the doctor, or getting to work on time may be worth paying a small fee. One of the benefits of these lanes is you can move in and out of them at 50-60 miles per hour.

While some people would criticize these lanes as “Lexus lanes,” I prefer to call them “Lumina lanes” as studies have shown people across different socio-economic backgrounds use them. Lee Munich, a Senior Fellow at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota argues that FAST lanes are fair. He has said: “...studies show thousands [of low-income and middle-income Southern California users] definitely do use the lanes when needs arise. In fact, the highest level of support for San Diego’s 4-year-old Express Lane comes from the lowest income users (80 percent support), not wealthy users.”

I think we are all familiar with the poll numbers that show as much as 81 percent of the population supports significant investment in our transportation infrastructure. The majorities in these polls reflect an awareness of the looming system capacity crisis, as well as what this means to our economic development and sustained prosperity.

How do we reconcile this support for investment in our transportation system with the fact that when given the opportunity to prove that support, in the countless referenda that have been brought to the voting booths, they are consistently defeated? For example, in 2002 there was a major push at the polling place where voters were given the chance to prove their support for transportation investment with increases in sales or gas taxes. In Missouri, voters were given the chance with Proposition B, which would have increased the sales tax one-half cent along with a 4 cent increase in the per gallon motor fuel tax. Combined, these increases would have reaped almost \$500 million per year for transportation improvements. It was defeated with only 27.5 percent voting in favor of the package. And there were countless other referenda that were defeated.

What are the lessons behind these failures? What should interested parties, and responsible policy makers and elected leaders learn from this pattern of failures? All these efforts had in common concerted, and very carefully planned, public education efforts, with broad group support well organized behind a common message to sell the voters on the need to support the packages in front of them in the voting booth. Even with the textbook lobbying campaigns, the measures were defeated. Why? Again and again, when impartial analysis of the defeats was rendered, the answer was the same: the voters had little confidence that the money would be spent properly. A common chorus was “you aren’t responsible with the money I am already giving you, why should I give you more?”

And even if the voters would have supported these increases, or other increases, for example the House Transpor-

tation and Infrastructure Committee plan to spend \$375 billion over the next six years, it is not enough. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) suggests that beyond merely maintaining the existing system, to begin actually making an investment in improving the system could require as much as \$93 billion a year. So, even the most radical calls for a gas tax increase will not provide the money we need. We need new ideas.

We do not have to look far to find them. In this country, our laboratories of democracy, the states, have been highly innovative about solving traffic problems. Many states like California, Colorado, Virginia, Florida and Texas are already using lanes similar to FAST lanes.

An excellent example of the kind of project I believe moves transportation in the right direction is the E-470 project in Colorado. According to the E-470 Public Highway Authority, this planned 48-mile toll-way will form the eastern half of a beltway encircling the Denver metropolitan area. This is a critical project for this fast-growing area. But in an age of rising demand, and insufficient resources, it is one that very easily could have been left on the drawing board. In-

stead, because Colorado took the initiative to create both the opportunity to harness the user-fee revenue stream, and to create an environment and atmosphere that was friendly and inviting to public-private partnerships, the E-470 stands as an example of what is possible. Because the state harnessed the energies, resources, and know-how of the private sector, people and goods will move more efficiently through Colorado. This \$722 million project is being entirely financed with an escrow bond-financing package using future toll revenues. Colorado will benefit from projects like E-470 because, by building this project entirely with private sector financing, they will not be put into a situation where they must choose between needs. They get a new beltway around Denver, and they still receive their federal highway trust fund apportionment to spend as needed. In other words, Colorado gets to have its cake, and eat it too.

Regrettably, the federal government has only taken baby steps in the direction of bringing 21st century transportation policy innovations from the states to the federal road system. In Texas, the Katy freeway will be widened from 11 lanes to 18, with four toll express lanes being added in the middle, according to information available from the Harris County Toll Road Authority. These four lanes will provide \$500 to \$600 million of the project’s overall \$1.2 billion price tag. This I-10 widening could be completed in four years because of such FAST lanes, rather than

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value that multiple uses contribute to our livelihoods and communities.

The people of the New West are starting to discover that restricting access to public lands affects their way of life just as much as it affects that of the people of the Old West. Those who never want to hear a chainsaw in a National Forest also never want to hear a snowmobile. The same people who never want a miner's or oil driller's bit to cut the earth also never want a rock climber to place a bolt in a canyon wall. Those who want to block access intend to prevent any kind of human use, whether it is for work, play, or management of the resources themselves.

I am a fiscal conservative who believes in the principles of multiple use, conservation, and management at the local level. I believe these fundamental ideas should guide all

natural resource decisions. Natural resource management is about balancing the needs of the people with the needs of the land.

I have never met someone who wants dirty air, undrinkable water, or devastated forests. We all want a livable environment. Where people differ is over how these goals will be accomplished.

By demonstrating a commitment to access, collaborative conservation, and active public land management, we can serve the needs of those who depend on the land and still guarantee that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the treasures of our public lands.

SENATOR CRAIG IS THE CHAIR OF THE SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING, AND SERVES ON THE APPROPRIATIONS, ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES, JUDICIARY, AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEES. MR. CRAIG WAS FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1980.

(Continued from page 17 - *Freeing Alternatives to Speedy Transportation*)

the 15 originally projected. The user fee will also help reduce the amount of federal funding required for the project, which is largely responsible for expediting the delivery of the project, but it also helps Texas by, as in Colorado, keeping the state from having to choose between priorities. The Lonestar state, and the city of Houston, will get Katy, and still have money for other priorities.

The FAST Act is not a new idea, but it is a new application of a time honored and technology modernized concept. *The Heritage Foundation* has said "the FAST Act promises one of the most significant improvements in the federal highway program since it was created in 1956." *The Wall Street Journal*, in an editorial on June 18, 2003 said the following about the FAST Act: "Most important, FAST would return control over highway projects to local officials, who are better placed than Washington to know which roads need upgrading...we hope more Republicans rediscover their free-market principles and join Mr. Kennedy's street-smart revolt."

As we reauthorize the six-year road bill, I hope to have this proposal included in that legislation. Thus far, both Chairman Young and the House leadership have been supportive of this idea. Prominent national organizations are also supportive of the legislation: Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), American Highway Users Alliance, Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), National Taxpayers Union (NTU), Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) as well as the state Departments of Transportation from Minnesota, Colorado and Washington.

I don't list these organizations supporting the FAST Act merely to toot my own horn. I do so because these groups comprise two sides in the battle that has been fought in the public policy debates on transportation investment. Whether they have been chiefly concerned with responsible spending, or with increasing the resources available to transportation, they all agree that it is time to get America moving FAST again.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNEDY SERVES ON THE HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE AND THE TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE. MR. KENNEDY WAS FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 2000.

VISIT THE AMERICAN SOUND ONLINE:

<http://republican.senate.gov/TheAmericanSound>

If you would be interested in contributing an article (approx. 2000 words) on an idea or proposal, please contact:

Don Seymour Jr.
don.seymour@mail.house.gov

Christopher Papagianis
christopher_papagianis@talent.senate.gov

Submissions may appear in print or on The American Sound website.

(Continued from page 8 - *Build America Bonds*)

Build America Bonds has received a lot of support from groups around the country that are interested in transportation and infrastructure investment. The Build America Bonds coalition includes National Heavy & Highway Alliance, American Association Port Authorities, Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors National Association, National Asphalt Pavement Association, National Sand Stone and Gravel Association, and National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association. Several newspapers have also published editorials in support of the idea and its merits.

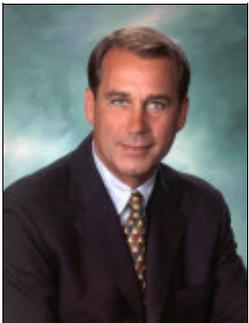
It is time to make Build America Bonds a priority for this pro-jobs, pro-growth Congress. I am confident this idea can win approval in Congress because everybody wants to increase the size of the transportation pie. Build America Bonds is a key to doing it.

SENATOR TALENT SERVES ON THE SENATE AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION & FORESTRY, ARMED SERVICES, AND ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEES, AND THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING. MR. TALENT WAS FIRST ELECTED TO CONGRESS IN 1992.

BEHIND THE AMERICAN SOUND

CRAFTING A JOURNAL OF AMERICAN IDEAS

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN BOEHNER



REP. JOHN BOEHNER (OH-8)
johnboehner.house.gov

Born in Cincinnati in November 1949 as one of 12 brother and sisters, John Boehner has lived in Southwest Ohio his entire life. He and his wife Debbie have been married for 30 years. They have two daughters – Lindsay and Tricia – and live in the northern Cincinnati suburb of West Chester.

After graduating from Cincinnati's Moeller High School in 1968, John earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from Xavier University in Cincinnati in 1977. Upon his graduation, he accepted a position with Nucite Sales, a small sales business in the packaging and plastics industry, and eventually became president of the firm.

While working in the private sector, John entered the political arena – first serving as Union Township trustee from 1982 to 1984 and then as a representative to the Ohio state legislature from 1984 to 1990.

In 1990, John was elected to represent Ohio's Eighth Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. His first two terms in the House were marked by several government reform accomplishments – including closing the House bank and uncovering illegal practices at the House post office. As a result of his reform-minded agenda, he was elected to the House Republican leadership after the Republican election victories in 1994.

Currently, John serves as chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce – a title he has held since 2001. As committee chair, he was instrumental in passing President Bush's education reform package into law and continues to work closely with him on education and labor-related initiatives on a variety of issues. In addition to his chairmanship, John also serves as Vice-Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

SENATOR JIM TALENT



SEN. JIM TALENT (MO)
talent.senate.gov

Sen. Jim Talent was born and raised in Des Peres, Missouri. He graduated from Kirkwood High School in 1973 and attended Washington University in St. Louis, where he received the Arnold J. Lien Prize as the most outstanding undergraduate in political science. He graduated with honors from the University of Chicago Law School in 1981 and clerked for Judge Richard Posner of the United States Court of Appeals from 1982 through 1983.

Jim Talent campaigned for the U.S. Senate on a platform of health care, job creation, economic growth and national defense. Missourians elected him to the Senate in November 2002. Previously, Sen. Talent served eight years in the U.S. House of Representatives (1993-2001) and eight years in the Missouri House (1985-1992).

Sen. Talent serves on four committees: The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee; the Senate Armed Services Committee; the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; and the Senate Special Committee on Aging.

As a freshman Senator, Jim Talent holds numerous Senate leadership positions. He was selected to serve as a Deputy Whip. He is the Chairman of the Armed Services Seapower Subcommittee and the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Marketing, Inspection, and Product Promotion.

Additionally, Sen. Talent is a member of the Republican Senate taskforce to address the growing number of Americans without health insurance. He is also a member of President Bush's Export Council and co-chair of the Senate Biofuels Caucus.

Jim and his wife, Brenda, were married in 1984 and live in Chesterfield, Missouri with their three children: Michael, age 13, Kate, age 11 and Chrissy, age 7.

THE AMERICAN SOUND IS A PROJECT OF REP. JOHN BOEHNER AND SEN. JIM TALENT. ITS PURPOSE IS TO PROPOSE, PROMOTE, AND DEFEND INNOVATIVE AND PRINCIPLED SOLUTIONS TO THE LONG-TERM CHALLENGES FACING THE COUNTRY, WHILE RELYING AND FOCUSING ON TRADITIONAL AMERICAN VALUES: FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, FAITH, & OPPORTUNITY.

THE AMERICAN SOUND



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